

California Health Interview Survey

CHIS Making an Impact—2013

Making
California's
Voices
Heard on
Health



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The **California Health Interview Survey (CHIS)** is the nation's largest state health survey and one of the largest health surveys in the United States. Conducted by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, CHIS regularly surveys up to 50,000 or more adults, teenagers and children, providing a detailed picture of the health and health care needs of California's diverse population.

Highlights of CHIS in 2013 include:

Supporting the Affordable Care Act (ACA)

The rollout of federal and state healthcare exchanges began in October 2013 and CHIS data were used to plan — and will be used to track — the components of this historic, far-reaching law and its effect on California:

- **ACA progress tracker:** The California HealthCare Foundation (CHCF) developed a Web tool, named "ACA 411," through the State Health Access Data Assistance Center that will help policymakers measure and monitor progress on three major aims of the Affordable Care Act: health insurance coverage, comprehensiveness and affordability of coverage, and access to services. Many CHIS indicators will be used by the online tool.
- **ACA enrollment estimates:** CHIS is one of the data sources for the California Simulation of Insurance Markets (CalSIM), a micro-simulation model created by the UC Berkeley Labor Center and the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. CalSIM data has served as a benchmark for enrollment goals and has helped California's state and local health officials, Covered California (the state's Health Benefits Exchange), medical providers, community representatives, insurance companies and others to understand the likely enrollment of Californians in an expanded Medi-Cal program and in Covered California.
- **Federal support:** Using CalSIM, which uses data sources including CHIS to estimate the impact of the ACA, a joint report by the UC Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education and the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research predicted that the federal government will pay for at least 85 percent of new Medi-Cal spending in 2014 through 2019. More than 1.4 million state residents will be newly eligible for Medi-Cal. This increase in coverage will have far-reaching benefits for Californians' health outcomes and the California economy.
- **Cost and sources of health insurance:** A California Health Benefits Review Program publication, *Estimates of Sources of Health Insurance in California for 2014*, used CalSIM modeling and CHIS data projections of mandated health insurance enrollment as a basis for estimated changes in benefit coverage, use, and costs due to benefit mandates.
- **Individual mandate:** CalSIM has also helped project how the "individual mandate" might impact coverage as well as who will be left out of new health care reform efforts.

Legislation

- **Medi-Cal:** A pair of state bills (S.B.X11 and A.B.X11) passed in June that authorized expansion of Medi-Cal in the state prominently cited two Center publications. One publication, *The State of Health Insurance in California: Findings from the 2009 California Health Interview Survey*, found that 7.1 million Californians were uninsured in 2009. The second featured CalSIM projections that estimated between 89 and 92 percent of Californians under 65 years of age will have health coverage after the Affordable Care Act is fully implemented.

Continued...

- **Soda tax:** Senate bill 622 cited data from two of the Center's policy briefs that used CHIS data to study sugary drinks, *Bubbling Over: Soda Consumption and Its Link to Obesity in California* and *A Patchwork of Progress: Changes in Overweight and Obesity Among California 5th, 7th and 9th Graders, 2005-2010*. The bill, which would tax sugary sodas and energy drinks, would add a one-cent tax per ounce to any "bottled sweetened beverage" with more than 25 calories and deposit the proceeds in a new Children's Health Promotion Fund.

Data on Vulnerable and Underserved Groups

Elder health

- **Elders:** California's Department of Aging released its new State Plan on Aging 2013-2017 which includes CHIS data from 2005 to 2009 to illustrate health and economic issues of particular concern to Golden State seniors.

Racial groups

- **African-Americans:** A report on aging and long-term care that used 2009 CHIS data suggests that 75 percent of California African-Americans 50 years and older are overweight or obese and fewer than 15 percent report exercising vigorously. The report, commissioned by Assemblywoman Mariko Yamada, chair of the **Committee on Aging and Long-Term Care**, also found that about 40 percent of the group live below 200 percent of the poverty level and are more than 2.5 times as likely to be on some kind of government aid.
- **Asian immigrants and mammography screening:** A study using 2009 CHIS data compared rates of mammography screening among different races of immigrant women aged 40 and older in the state. The study found Filipina and Vietnamese-Americans had the highest rates of screening and Korean-Americans the lowest. The groups have low mammography screening rates, especially recent immigrants who lack health insurance.
- **Mexican immigrants:** A joint report that used CHIS 2009 data examines the impact that lack of health insurance and access to care has on Mexican immigrants, who are disproportionately affected. The report presents a detailed portrait of this population and considers the health care implications of the social exclusion experienced by these immigrants.

Women and children

- **Women's health:** Women are living longer, getting more and better health care, and making steady progress in certain professional fields. Yet inequities persist in other

National Healthcare Disparities Report (NHDR)

The federal report, published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in May, featured numerous charts using CHIS data, noting that CHIS fills the "gaps" in national data for many underserved populations: people with limited English proficiency; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals; and Asian and Hispanic subpopulations. The reports notes, "The sampling methods used in CHIS are an example of how important disparities can be examined when data are collected this way."

The report makes a special nod to CHIS's extensive collection of LGBT data, and says the NHDR will "continue to feature health care data on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) populations using data from the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS)," since the HHS and other organizations have yet to develop health care measures and data for LGBT populations.

areas including mental health, domestic violence and equal pay, according to the *Report on the Status of Women and Girls in California* published by **Mount St. Mary's College**. More than one million women have symptoms associated with serious psychological distress and they report higher rates of psychological distress than men, according to the report, which used 2009 CHIS data.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual

- A report by The Williams Institute of UCLA School of Law used 2007-2009 CHIS data to examine and compare lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) poverty rates with poverty rates among heterosexuals. The authors found that one-third of lesbian couples and 20.1 percent of gay male couples without a high school diploma are in poverty, compared to 18.8 percent of different-sex married couples. Job discrimination and lack of access to tax and financial benefits given to married heterosexual couples are possible contributors to poverty in this group.

Diverse Topics

- **Youth soda consumption:** A joint study between the **UCLA Center for Health Policy Research** and the **California Center for Public Health Advocacy**, *Still Bubbling Over: California Adolescents Drinking More So-*

da and Other Sugar-Sweetened Beverages, used multiple years of CHIS data and found an alarming 8 percent spike in soda consumption among the biggest consumers of these beverages — adolescents. But a key success was noted: the drop in consumption among younger children.

- **Economy:** A Center analysis, *The Effects of the Great Recession on Health Insurance: Changes in the Uninsured Population from 2007 to 2009*, looked at California data on the uninsured and found that of the approximately 700,000 Californians to lose health insurance during 2007 and 2009, the greatest increase was among "baby boomers," residents between the ages of 45 and 64. Using data from CHIS, the study's authors created a "recession index" and grouped the state's 58 counties into four categories that gauge the impact of the recession: low, moderate, medium and high.
- **Neighborhoods:** A study in the **American Journal of Public Health** used CHIS data to explore whether home ownership resulted in better-perceived health or improved health behaviors. The answer? Not really. The authors found home ownership to be a statistically insignificant predictor of better health for racial and ethnic minorities. But regardless of ethnic group, homeowners reported that they were less likely to delay getting needed medical care or prescription medications if they perceived that they lived in a safe neighborhood.
- **Smokers:** Smokers in California were more likely than non-smokers and former smokers to be unemployed, according to a study in **Preventive Medicine**. Using 2007 and 2009 CHIS data, researchers found that nearly 21 percent of the job-seeking unemployed were smokers compared with about 15 percent of the employed and nearly 16 percent of the unemployed who were not seeking a job. Researchers said employment service agencies could be well placed for reaching smokers and treating tobacco dependency.
- **Mental health of California children:** A study in **Journal of Behavioral Health Services and Research** found that minor emotional problems were found in 18.7 percent and severe difficulties in 7.4 percent of California's children aged 5 to 11, according to parent-identified need. The study, using CHIS data from 2005, 2007 and 2009, said that mental health needs varied by racial/ethnic groups and that a "one-size-fits-all approach" regarding policies aimed at reducing mental health disparities would not be effective for all racial/ethnic groups.

Region, Local and Nonprofit Use of CHIS

CHIS Health Profiles, released in 2013, featured county-specific statistics for non-elderly adults from the 2011-2012 CHIS. Each county or region has a one-page sheet with statistics on insurance, asthma, obesity, food security and more. Profiles for Los Angeles Service Planning Areas (SPAs) and San Diego's Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) regions are also included.

- **County data:** CHIS data helped power the online *County Nutrition & Food Insecurity Profiles* released in November by **California Food Policy Advocates**. The online profiles provide CHIS and other data showing food insecurity prevalence, CalFresh enrollees, school lunch and breakfast program participation, and more. The food insecurity data included in the profiles show at least four million low-income Californians struggled to afford enough food in 2011-2012.
- A report from **California Breathing** used data from CHIS to reveal a grim picture of the burden of asthma in the state. Among the findings, the report said that about five million Californians — or one in eight people — have been diagnosed with asthma and that in 2010 there were almost 35,000 asthma hospitalizations in California, at a cost of more than \$1 billion in annual charges.

Other Local Reports that Used CHIS Data in 2013

- *Community Action Partnership of Orange County, 2012-2013 Community Action Plan*
- *Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project, Year 19, 2013*
- *Growing Healthy in the San Joaquin Valley, 2013 San Joaquin Valley Fall Policy Conference*
- *San Bernardino County 2013 Community Indicators Report*
- *Community Health Needs Assessment of Stanislaus County, 2013*
- *San Diego County Senior Health Report, June 2013, San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency*

CHIS as a Role Model

- A **National Academy of Sciences** report suggests CHIS as a national model for data collection for the LGB population. A one-page fact sheet shows how researchers and policymakers at the national level are turning to the **California Health Interview Survey (CHIS)** for data on

Data for Academic Research

CHIS includes a wide range of health data that is frequently used by researchers at universities throughout the nation to publish journal articles and studies. At least **42** journal articles in 2013 used CHIS data. Topics included insurance coverage and the Affordable Care Act, mammography screenings, sugar-sweetened fruit juice, racial and ethnic disparities, colorectal cancer, senior health, English proficiency, and parent-identified emotional and mental difficulty among children. The articles were published in **The American Journal of Public Health, Journal of Family and Economic Issues, Women's Health Issues, The American Journal of Epidemiology, The Journal of Public Health Management Practice** and many more.

lesbian, gay and bisexual health. **CHIS** is one of the few comprehensive, ongoing state-level health surveys that regularly collects information on sexual orientation and the issues effecting the LGBT community.

Recognition and Awards

- **CHIS lauded by National Cancer Institute:** An independent panel of experts evaluated CHIS's contributions, utility, and impact of the CHIS cancer-control items and concluded that the survey's ability to provide local-level cancer and other data on a racially and ethnically diverse, multilingual population makes it a unique resource for policymakers and health practitioners. See the report, *Evaluation of the California Health Interview Survey: Cancer Prevention and Control Research, Clinical Practice, and Health Policy*.
- **Data award:** CHIS – and specifically the survey's free, online health data query tool www.AskCHIS.com – was once again nominated to be a "Health Data All Star" by the Health Data Consortium. *AskCHIS* is one of 50 prominent domestic resources for health data at the federal, state and local levels housed on the Health Data Consortium's website.

CHIS Training Across State

Training sessions were offered from Pomona to Oakland to teach people how to find and harness health data gathered by CHIS using the *AskCHIS* Web tool. The free, in-person classes — as well as numerous

online webinars — were supported with grants from Kaiser and the California Endowment.

Funders

CHIS is supported by California's and the nation's leading health and health care leaders. Recent funders include:

- The California Department of Public Health
- The California Department of Health Care Services
- The California Endowment
- First 5 California
- Kaiser Permanente
- Blue Shield of California Foundation
- San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency
- The National Cancer Institute
- The California Wellness Foundation
- The California Office of the Patient Advocate



CHIS by the Numbers:

899,995: *AskCHIS* total queries since 2002

40,156: *AskCHIS* total users since 2002

13,286: Public Use Files downloaded since 2002

Articles & reports: CHIS data have been used in hundreds of peer-reviewed journal articles, organizational reports, fact sheets and issue briefs each year.

Media coverage: CHIS data, reports and experts are quoted in hundreds of local, regional and national media—television, newspapers, magazines, newsletters, blogs and websites—reports each year.

Learn more: www.chis.ucla.edu